News Archive - February 2005

2-28 Signature Sets Season for 2005-06

Signature Theatre has set the shows to make up its 2005-06 season which spans the end of their stay at the current house on Arlington's South Four Mile Run Drive and the beginning of their tenure in the new two-theater complex just three blocks north in Shirlington Village. The final shows in the old house will include the Potomac Region premiere of the 2002 Tony Award musical (best score and best book) *Urinetown* and the world premiere of *Nevermore*, a musical with a book by Norman Allen, lyrics based on the writings of Edgar Allen Poe and music by Matt Conner. The first show at the new 250-seat house will be Stephen Sondheim's *Into the Woods* directed by Eric Schaeffer and the first show in the new 99-seat "Stage Two" will be Helen Carey and Rick Foucheux starring in *The Sex Habits of American Women*. In addition, the season will include a world premiere to be announced later.

2-25 A Few One-Time Only Shows You Might Check Out

Three theater groups are presenting one-night shows tomorrow and Monday that weren't announced in time for listing in our weekly free email Potomac Stages Update, but which might interest some of our readers. Trumpet Vine Theatre Company is presenting *The Wrestling Season* by Laurie Brooks at the Clarendon Presbyterian Church of Arlington (1305 N. Jackson Street) at 7 pm on Saturday. Admission is free. This is the play about the impact of rumors of homosexuality in a high school wrestling team which the theater company presented at Monday Night at the National earlier this month. It will be repeated on March 5 at the Unitarian Universalists of Sterling (22135 Davis Drive). This Saturday night at 7:30, The Warehouse on 7th Street NW will host a staged reading of a satire *King George II*, a look at George W. Bush in an Elizabethan manner which playwright Jamie Elizabeth Stiehm calls "A Tragedy of Shakespearean Proportions." On Monday night at 9 pm there will be a performance in a rock club, the Black Cat at 1811 14th Street NW with material based on Shakespeare. A new group calling itself the Taffety Punk Theatre Company, which features Marcus Kyd who is currently appearing in Intimations for Saxophone at Arena Stage, will present *And Then It Faster Rock'd* which takes its title from a line in Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece*. The group has assembled excerpts from Shakespeare's plays and poetry involving noise. Admission is $7.

2-24 St. Mark's Parishioners Perform Benefit Vagina Monologues

Eve Ensler's collection of women's comments titled *The Vagina Monologues* has been performed as a solo act and as a series of readings by multiple performers including show business stars and political celebrities. This weekend, it will be six parishioners from the Capitol Hill church that theatergoers know as the home of the quality community theater group, St. Mark's Players. This special performance is not a St. Mark's Players production, but will still be performed in the nave of St. Mark's Episcopal Church at 3rd and A Streets SE. Children under 13 will not be admitted and teenagers under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. The performances will be a benefit with the profits split between local organizations My Sister's Place and Women Empowered Against Violence (WEAVE) and the national V-Day Foundation to benefit women in Iraq. Performances will be Friday and Saturday evenings at 7:30. Admission is $15. For further information, call 240-235-6544.

2-23 Community Theaters Invited To Participate In One-Act Play Festival

Community theaters throughout the Potomac Region are invited to present short works (plays not lasting more than 55 minutes) for the 24th Annual One-Act Play Festival sponsored by the NVTA, the organization founded in 1980 as the Northern Virginia Theatre Alliance but since expanded to include community theaters in Washington and Maryland. Membership in NVTA is not a requirement for participation in the event. The festival will be held over the last two two weekends in June at CenterStage in the Reston Community Center. Winners will be announced at a ceremony on the final evening, Sunday June 26. The winners of the "Best Overall Production" award will be eligible to participate in a statewide competition later in the year. Any additional information may be obtained by contacting Janice Dionne at 703-730-3232.

2-22 Shakespeare Theatre Hosts 16th Annual Student Competition

Tenth to twelfth grade students will compete in the interpretation/performance of sonnets and scenes from Shakespeare in the 16th Annual Shakespeare Competition in a two day event at the Shakespeare Theatre on 7th Street NW. The opening round begins this Thursday at 8:30 am with performances by upwards of 40 students from public, private and parochial schools throughout the Potomac Region. A panel of judges will select participants to advance to the concluding round which will be held at 7 pm next Monday. While the judges are deliberating, John Andrews of the English Speaking Union will interview Shakespeare Theatre company member Ted van Griethuysen about the Shakespearian roles he has found most enjoyable. The finalists will reprise their performances for the concluding round. This time, while the judges deliberate, Mr. Andrews will discuss the factors to be weighed when reviewing a show with Peter Marks of the Washington Post. The three students who place highest in the judging will receive a $200, $300 or $500 prize and the grand prize winner will advance to the National Shakespeare Competition to be held at New York's Lincoln Center in April. Admission to the local competition on Thursday and next Monday is free but reservations are requested.

2-18 Signature Offers Free Performance Of Another Norman Allen Play Tomorrow

February 18, 2005 - *The Girl in No Man's Land*, the latest in the series of premiere plays written and directed by Norman Allen in collaboration with the students of Wakefield High School, will be given a free public performance at Signature Theatre tomorrow afternoon at 2. Allen and the students have dealt with the Russian Revolution, the Holocaust and other historical subjects in previous Signature in the Schools productions. This time, they take on the subject of World War I. The cast consists of students in the program and one professional actor, Harry Winter. No reservations are required.

2-17 Stages For All Ages Launches Seventh Year of Free Tickets For Youth

The League of Washington Theatre's Stages for All Ages program will have thirty-two participating companies in this year's program offering free tickets for children under 18 accompanied by paying adults. The program will cover selected performances at sixty-four productions of thirty professional companies throughout the Potomac Region. This year's participating companies include the African Continuum Theatre Company, The American Century Theater, Arena Stage, Catalyst Theater, the Clarice Smith Center, Classika Theatre, Dance Place, Discovery Theater, Folger Theatre, Ford's Theatre, GALA Hispanic Theatre, Horizons Theatre, Imagination Stage, The In Series, The Keegan Theatre, The Kennedy Center, Metropolitan Ebony Theatre, The National Symphony, The National Theatre, Olney Theatre Center, Rep Stage, Rorschach Theatre, Round House Theatre, The Shakespeare Theatre, The Studio Theatre, Synetic Theatre, Teatro de la Luna, Theater Alliance, Theater J, Theater of the First Amendment, The Washington Savoyards and The Washington Stage Guild.

2-16 Shepherdstown Festival Sets Plays For 2005 Season

The Contemporary American Theater Festival at Shepherd University in West Virginia will have two world premieres among the four new plays presented in repertory this summer. The festival will run from July 8 to 31 with these plays:

- *Father Joy* - The premiere of a play by Sheri Wilner in which the father of a sculptor begins to be less and less visible to his wife and daughter.
- *American Tet* - The premiere of a play Lydia Stryk about the experiences of American soldiers in Iraq.
- *The God of Hell* - Ed Herendeen directs a new dark comedy by Sam Shepard.
- *Sonia Flew* - Melinda Lopez's time-twisting play deals with the post-9/11 world and Cuba at the time of the missile crisis.

2-15 National Books I Am My Own Wife For Two Week Stop

Last Year's Pulitzer and Tony Award Winning play *I Am My Own Wife* will play the National Theatre here from March 30 to April 10 as part of a brief post-Broadway tour. Jefferson Mayes, who won the Tony Award for Best Actor in this one-actor, multiple character play, will reprise his work as the German transvestite who survived the Nazis and the Communists.

2-14 Theater Community Mourns Death of WAPAVA's Jim Taylor

Jim Taylor, the energetic, can-do man who found a need for documenting live theater in the Potomac Region and filled it single-handedly with the formation of the Washington Area Performing Arts Video Archive (WAPAVA), died of of appendiceal cancer last Thursday. Taylor founded WAPAVA in 1993 and personally recorded virtually all of the over 400 videos capturing live productions of local companies which now reside in the archive and are available for public viewing and study at the Washingtonianna Collection of the DC Public Library. A co-location agreement which will make the collection available as well at the Clarice Smith Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Maryland in College Park was announced last fall. The collection contains a priceless selection of most of the best of the work on local stages for over a decade. The board of directors of WAPAVA have said that recordings will continue to be made. Memorial service arrangements have not yet been announced but a service may be scheduled in late March to coincide with WAPAVA's annual event awarding the Bauer Prize for Outstanding Contribution to the Performing Arts in the Washington Area. In the meantime, the family has asked that, in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the James J. Taylor Memorial Fund, c/o WAPAVA. 4205 Glenridge St., Kensington, MD 20895. Contributions will be distributed to WAPAVA and to the Washington Hospice.

2-11 Serenity Offers Paul Robeson Show This Weekend

Serenity Players of the St. Francis Xavier Church in South East Washington is presenting Hugh Staples in a two performer show based on the life and career of Paul Robeson. Staples performs as Robeson while James Foster, Jr. appears as Lawrence Brown, Robeson's pianist for over 30 years. The performances will be in the church's Bailey Room at 2815 O Street SE tonight at 7:30, tomorrow at 1pm and Sunday at 4 pm. Admission is $12, $8 for students under 18 and for seniors. For information, call 202-575-4248.

2-10 Smithsonian Sponsors An Evening With Julie Harris Tonight

Julie Harris, six time Tony Award winning actress, will be the guest at a Smithsonian Institution Residents Associates program tonight. Harris is in town in part to attend last night's opening of the Ford's Theatre production of Carson McCuller's *The Member of the Wedding*. Harris played twelve-year-old Frankie in the original Broadway production of that play in 1950 and went on to acclaim in the movie version two years later opposite her co-star Ethel Waters. Harris was nominated for an Oscar for her performance. For information on The Resident Associates program, call 202-357-3030.

2-09 Hathaway & Levine's "Just Theater" Sets February Playdates

The February edition of "Just Theater," the television program during which theater critic Faiga Levine and Potomac Stages' reviewer Brad Hathaway discuss currently running shows, will air starting tonight on Montgomery Cable Channel 21 in Maryland. The plays to be discussed on this episode are Folger Theatre's *Romeo and Juliet*, Signature Theatre's *Fallen From Proust* and The Shakespeare Theatre's *Lorenzaccio*. The program will be seen at 10:30 tonight, 8 pm Friday February 11 and again six times during the month, the 13th at 10:30 am, the 16th at 8 pm, the 18th at 4:30 pm, the 20th at 9 pm, the 23rd at 8 pm, the 25th at 4:30 pm and the 27th at 9 pm.

2-08 Play Set for Woolly Nominated For Theatre Critics/Steinberg Award

The Clean House, a comedy that Woolly Mammoth has slated for this summer in their new home at 7th and D Streets NW was one of six finalists for this year's American Theatre Critics/Steinberg New Play Award. The winner will be announced at the Humana Festival of New American Plays in Louisville, Kentucky, on April 2. The winner receives a prize of $15,000, with $5,000 prizes to the two runners-up. The nominated *The Clean House* by Sarah Ruhl was first produced last September at the Yale Repertory Theatre, New Haven, Conn. The American Theatre Critics Association announcement called the play "a dark comedy about a dysfunctional family whose Brazilian maid would rather craft a good joke than clean their house," while Woolly Mammoth says the play "overflows with jokes we don't understand, deep feelings we can't explain, and houses that are never as clean as we want them to be." Woolly's production will feature Mitchell Hébert, Naomi Jacobson and Sarah Marshall and will be directed by Rebecca Bayla Taichman. The other nominated plays are:

- *After Ashley* by Gina Gionfriddo
- *Brooklyn Boy* by Donald Margulies
- *Last of the Boys* by Steven Dietz

- *Madagascar* by J.T. Rogers
- *Singing Forest* by Craig Lucas

2-07 And The Ushers' Monthly Favorite Show Award Goes To . . . TWO SHOWS!

The monthly balloting among those theater enthusiasts who usher in the region's theaters and participate in Potomac Stages Ushers' Favorite Show Award program has resulted in a tie for only the second time since the establishment of the award program. The two shows selected as the Ushers' Favorite Show of January 2005 are Signature Theatre's premiere of Norman Allen's fast paced comedy *Fallen From Proust* and Studio Theatre's intense production of Vassily Sigarev's tale of survival in post-Soviet Russia, *Black Milk*. Interestingly, the other time there was a tie was in February last year. So many new shows open in the first two months of each year that the competition is intense. *Fallen From Proust*, a funny romp love triangle story raising issues of friendships between gay men and heterosexual women features Michael Glenn, Damon Boggess and Hope Lambert with Daniel Frith introducing second act complications. *Black Milk* reunites Holly Twyford and Matthew Montelongo, in a biting social commentary piece set in a rural Russian train depot where the pair is running a scam on the supposedly gullible locals. Both productions are playing through February 20.

2-04 Potomac Stages Profiles Fight Choreographer Brad Waller

The latest Potomac Region theater personality to be featured in Potomac Stages' series of personality profiles is Brad Waller, fight choreographer, whose work has been seen at the Shakespeare Theatre, Arena Stage, The Folger Theatre, The Kennedy Center and Ford's Theatre. He is on the faculty of the Shakespeare Theatre's Academy for Classical Acting and is the Artistic Director of the International Order of the Sword and the Pen. Click here to read the full profile.

2-03 Professionals Team Up with Students for AU's Antigone

Helen Hayes Award nominee, actor Paul Morella (*Angels in America, Part I*,) five time Helen Hayes Award winner, set designer James Kronzer (*The Drawer Boy*) and two-time Oscar winner Russell Williams (*Dances with Wolves*) join the students of American University's Department of Performing Arts for a production of Sophocles' *Antigone* which will be performed at the Greenberg Theatre over the next two weekends. The production will feature the use of American Sign Language incorporated into the performances of the actors, many of whom worked with Imagination Stage's Deaf Access Program founder and director Lisa Agogliati and Donna Salamoff to incorporate signing into their performances.

2-02 Smithsonian Hosts Wasserstein Tonight

Wendy Wasserstein, Pulitzer Prize winning author of *An American Daughter, The Heidi Chronicles, Isn't It Romantic* and *Welcome To My Rash and Third*, has written a book. Her take-off on diet guides is entitled *Sloth*. Tonight at 6 she discusses her book which is the fifth in the series of the Seven Deadly Sins. The program of the Smithsonian Associates Program has an admission charge of $15. To register, call 202-357-3030.

2-01 Norman Allen Is Guest At Free Page To Stage Session Tonight

Emmy and Charles MacArthur Award winning playwright Norman Allen, whose new comedy, *Fallen From Proust*, is currently playing at Signature Theatre, will be the guest at the From Page to Stage program sponsored by Signature and the Arlington Public Library. The session will be held at the Library's Central Branch, 1015 North Quincy Street from 7 to 8 this evening. Allen is the author of *Melville Slept Here, Nijinsky's Last Dance, Christmas Carol Rag, Waiting in Tobolsk,* and *In The Garden,* and is the originator of the Signature in the Schools program which has had student involvement in plays Allen writes specifically for the program, including this year's *The Girl in No Man's Land*.

Click here for the news archive for January 2005